

Living The Christian Life Series
“Lesson 8 – Positioned for Success in Living the Christian Life”

By
Dr. Troy S. Welch, Pastor-Teacher
Spheres of Grace Ministries, Inc.
6809 E Hudlow Road
Hayden, ID 83835
(805) 701-6643

Series Text: Romans 12:1 *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.*

Applicational Text: Ephesians 1:3-5 *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Heavenly places IN CHRIST, according as He hath chosen us IN HIM before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him IN LOVE: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will.*

Introduction:

In this current series we are studying Living The Christian Life. In our study last time we stated that God in His grace has provided the assets that enable us to live the Christian Life and that we have access to those assets by faith. Faith without works is dead (James 2:17) Our faith for salvation must be in the finished work of Jesus Christ who paid our sin debt with His death on the cross and through his resurrection assures eternal life to all who place their faith on Him. In order to live the Christian life effectively our faith must be placed upon His Word with its promises, principles, doctrines, and mechanics. That is we must understand His Word and place our dependency upon it as our way of life.

Motivated by His love for us, He offers His grace, and we appropriate that grace by placing our dependency upon it. This concept is based upon the doctrine of Positional Truth, assets available to us because of our position in Christ. This is illustrated by a cross and two spheres. The cross represents the doctrine of Christ, and the two spheres represent the two areas of relationship with God revealed through the doctrine of Christ. One sphere represents God’s grace provision for salvation, and the other represents His grace provision for living the Christian life. We will review our position in Christ for Salvation first because it is the basis for the provision of the assets which enable us to live the Christian life. Then we will explore the lower sphere – fellowship because it is there, we maintain access to the assets enabling us to live the Christian life effectively.

Through the doctrine of “Positional Truth” we discover that we are positioned for success in living the Christian life by divine assets and the ability to access them in the Scriptures related to these two spheres. So let’s review our position in Christ in the Sphere of Salvation.

The Doctrine of Positional Truth - Salvation

"In Christ – The Top Sphere or Circle"

This study investigates one of the most important doctrines of the Bible. It is a study of the doctrine of "Positional Truth," the teaching concerning the believer's position in Christ. It is the basic doctrine around which all the tremendous aspects of grace are applied. The doctrine of "Positional Truth" provides a framework within which we can understand eternal security, predestination, election, foreknowledge, foreordination, adoption, and many other major doctrines of the Church Age. Titus 2:14 tells us that Christ *"...gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."*

The word *"peculiar"* is translated from the Greek word *"periousion."* *"Periousion"* means, *"a dot encompassed by a circle."* It shows ownership or possession. Although the word is translated *"peculiar"* it does not refer to an “odd ball” or an “eccentric.” It has a much deeper meaning. It refers to our position in Christ. It contains one of the most important doctrines of the Bible - The Believer’s Position in Christ. The believer is identified by the dot and Christ is represented by the sphere or circle. We are encompassed by Him. We are in Christ.

Look at Ephesians 1:3-14 (This is one connected sentence in the Greek text.):

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Heavenly places IN CHRIST, according as He hath chosen us IN HIM before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him IN LOVE: having predestinated us unto the adoption of sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, through which He hath made us accepted IN THE BELOVED: IN WHOM we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace, IN WHICH He hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence, having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to the good pleasure which He hath purposed IN HIMSELF: that in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather together IN ONE all things IN CHRIST, both which are in Heaven and which are on earth; even IN HIM, IN WHOM also we obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will: that we should be to the praise of His glory, who first trusted IN CHRIST: IN WHOM ye also trusted, after ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of salvation; IN WHOM also when ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, who is the earnest of our inheritance unto the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory."

Our position in Christ is stressed over and over again in this great passage - fourteen times our position IN CHRIST is identified in this one sentence. And there are fourteen results of our being in Christ that are listed in here. Let's look at them....

- "Blessed with all spiritual blessings in the Heavenlies" (verse 3)
- "Chosen" (verse 4)
- "Holy and without blame before Him" (verse 4)
- "Predestinated" (verse 5 & 11)
- "Adopted as sons" (verse 5)
- "Accepted" (verse 6)
- "Redemption" (verse 7)
- "Forgiveness of sins" (verse 7)
- "Given wisdom and prudence" (verse 8)
- "Made to know the mystery of His will" (verse 9)
- "Obtained an inheritance" (verse 11)
- "Enabled to bring praise to His glory" (verse 12)
- "Sealed by the Holy Spirit" (verse 13)
- "Given the down payment on our inheritance" (verse 14)

At the moment of our personal faith in Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit places us into Jesus Christ. Placing us into Christ is described as the *"Baptism of The Holy Spirit."*

I Corinthians 12:13 says:

"For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."

The Holy Spirit is the agent that baptizes (immerses) us into Jesus Christ. The word *"baptized"* is translated from the Greek word *"e-baptis-themen,"* which is from the root word *"baptidzo."* It means, *to immerse into union with, for the purpose of identification.* At the moment of salvation, the Holy Spirit immerses us into Christ for the purpose of our being identified with Him. We are the dot, and Christ is the circle (sphere). There are a number of unique things which happen at that moment.

At the moment Of Salvation We Are Regenerated -- Born Again.

Titus 3:5 says:

"Not by works which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit."

The words *"Holy Spirit,"* in the Greek text, are in the genitive case. They are used here for genitive of source. That is, The Holy Spirit is the source from which this *"regeneration"* and *"renewing"* comes. The Holy Spirit is the agent.

John 3:5-6 says:

"Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."

Again, the genitive of source is used in these verses. Jesus was saying, except a man be born from the source of the water (physical birth) and the source of the Spirit (spiritual birth - salvation), he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. He went on to say, that which is born from the source of the flesh (water birth) is (present tense = keeps on being) flesh, and that which is born from the source of the Spirit (spiritual birth - salvation) is (present tense = keeps on being) spirit.

Ephesians 2:4-5 says:

"But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us,

Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace are ye saved);"

At The Moment Of Salvation We Are Indwelt by the Holy Spirit.

I Corinthians 6:19 says:

"What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?"

At The Moment Of Salvation We Are Sealed By The Holy Spirit -- Made Eternally Secure.

Ephesians 1:13 says:

"In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: In whom also after (when) that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise."

Ephesians 4:30 says:

"And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."

At The Moment Of Salvation We Receive the Capacity for The Filling (controlling) Of The Holy Spirit: Which Enables Us to Live The Christian Life.

Ephesians 5:18 says:

"And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit."

The word filling is translated from the Greek word 'plerousthe' it means saturated to the point of control. This verse is talking about the believer being controlled by the Holy Spirit. As a result of our position in Christ we have the capacity to be controlled by the Holy Spirit and produce the fruit of the Spirit.

At The Moment Of Salvation We Receive At Least One Spiritual Gift Through Which We Can Function as a member of the Body -- The Church.

I Corinthians 12:11 says:

"But all these worketh that one and the selfsame spirit, dividing to every man severally (individually) as he will."

The list goes on and on identifying the many things that happen the moment we are placed, by the Holy Spirit, into Christ.

The Greeks diagrammed the word **"periousion"** (*peculiar*) as a dot encompassed by a circle to emphasize that the dot cannot get out of the circle, but, eternally, belongs to the circle. This, position in Christ belongs to the carnal believer as well as the spiritual believer.

I Corinthians 3:1-3 says:

"And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as carnal, even as babes in Christ."

I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it. Neither yet now are ye able."

For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?"

Please understand! This does not give us a license to sin but keeps us secure by charging our sins to Christ.

Romans 4:25 says:

"Who (Christ) was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification."

Remember! Sin is not charged to the born-again child of God.

Romans 4:8 says:

"Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin."

I John 3:9 says:

"Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God."

John is not talking about sinless perfection, because he has earlier stated that we do sin. In an earlier study we saw that this was a reference to our sins being charged to Christ and not imputed to us.

I John 1:8-10 says:

"If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us."

Some have suggested, because of the use of the present tense in the phrase "*does not commit*" in I John chapter 3, verse 9, that John was saying that those born of God do not "*practice sin*." We dealt with this previously. So, allow me to simply remind you that the Greek word for practice is "*prasso*." John used the word "*poiei*" which means, *to perform*. If John had wanted to say *practice*, he would have used the word "*prasso*" just as he did in John 3:20 and 5:29.

No! John was saying, those who are born of God are never charged with the commission of sin. All our sins are charged to Christ.

Isaiah 53:6 speaking prophetically says:

"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all."

I Peter 2:24-25 speaking historically says:

"Who His own self bare our sins in His body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed."

~For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls."

Christ has already settled that account, once and for all. Our sins have now become only a family matter as a result of salvation. Romans 8:1 tells us there is no judgment to those *IN CHRIST JESUS*. The word "*judgment*" is from the Greek word, "*katakrima*," and should be translated, condemnation. You also need to note that the King James text adds the phrase, "*who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit*." The best, and older, Greek manuscripts do not have this phrase but end after the word Jesus. It was probably copied from verse four in Romans 8 where it is properly found in the best manuscripts. Romans 8:1 simply tells us that there is no condemnation to those who are *IN CHRIST JESUS*! Notice the position, *IN CHRIST JESUS*. The believer is eternally placed into Christ and never faces condemnation again.

Every passage of Scripture in the New Testament that deals with salvation is in either the perfect tense, which means a completed action in past time with the results continuing forever; or, in an aorist tense which means, a point of time, taken out of time, divorced from time, and perpetuated forever. We are eternally secure in our position *IN CHRIST*!

This position, a dot with a circle around it, speaks of the sphere of our relationship as Sons of God. It is based on the once and for all act of the Holy Spirit who baptizes us into Christ at the moment of our faith in Him.

Our position, *IN CHRIST*, results in our sharing what Christ has. We share His eternal life (I John 5:11-12); we share His righteousness (II Corinthians 5:21); we share His Sonship (Galatians 3:26); we share His heirship (Romans 8:16-17); we share His election (Ephesians 1:4); we share His destiny (Ephesians 1:5-11); we share His kingship (II Peter 1:11); we share His priesthood (I Peter 2:5, 9); and, we share His sanctification (I Corinthians 1:2).

Our position in Christ explains the doctrines of election and predestination. Jesus Christ is the elect one. Everyone in union with Him shares His election. Through our free will, we can choose to be in Him (I Peter 2:6). Jesus has been predestined. We can choose to be *IN HIM* and share His destiny (I Corinthians 1:2). You see! All who are *IN HIM* are elect and all who are *IN HIM* are predestined to eternity with Him. All who reject Him are destined to hell. But, Praise God! The choice to be *IN CHRIST* is ours.

Our Position in Christ makes us new creatures.

II Corinthians 5:17 says:

"Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold all things are become new."

"In Christ," refers to the dot and circle, and speaks of our position in Christ.

"New creature," speaks of the new birth, whereby, we are born of the spirit and receive a human spirit which provides us with the ability to understand the things of God. Man is originally born body and soul. Man's soul gives him the ability to perceive and understand human phenomena. At salvation he is born spiritually - he then is body soul and spirit. The human spirit received as a result to the new birth gives man the ability to perceive and understand spiritual phenomena.

I Corinthians 2:14 says,

"But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know [them], because they are spiritually discerned."

The word *"natural"* is translated from the Greek word *'psuchikos'* and means soulish. The soulish man cannot understand the things of God. We must be born of the Spirit in order to understand such things.

The phrase *"Old things are passed away,"* back in I Corinthians 5:17 refers to our previous status of being spiritually dead.

And the phrase *"all things are become new,"* refers to our new life -- our spiritual life.

Our position in Christ is retroactive.... Let me explain... Because we are in union with Christ, we died, positionally, with Him. Therefore, our position is retroactive all the way back to the cross.

II Timothy 2:11 says:

"It is a faithful saying: if we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him."

The word *"if"* in II Timothy 2:11, is a first class conditional clause in the Greek text and means, *it is true*. It should be correctly translated, *"since we are dead with Him, we shall also live with Him."* At the point of your salvation, you die with Christ. In speaking of death one time I said, I died nineteen hundred and seven years before I was born. That's right! Jesus died on the cross in the year 30 AD. I was born in the year 1937 AD.

Therefore, I was born nineteen hundred and seven years after the crucifixion of Christ. When I accepted Christ as my personal Savior, in 1946, I was placed into Christ by the Holy Spirit. My position in Christ, resulted in my identification with His death (which was a substitute for me), nineteen hundred and seven years before I was born. See? As far as God's records show, I died on that cross in 30 AD, because I am *"dead with Him."* At our salvation, our position becomes retroactive back to the cross, and our account is settled. That's retroactive positional truth.

Our position in Christ is obtained in total at the moment of salvation. It is not progressive. It is not an experience, and is not related to human merit, but is based on grace, and is accomplished by the Holy Spirit. It is not something we feel, it is something that exists regardless of how we feel. It is eternal in nature.

II Timothy 2:13 is written to born again Christians. It says:

"If we believe not, yet He abideth faithful; He cannot deny Himself."

The word *"If"* in II Timothy 2:13, is a first class conditional clause in the Greek text and must be correctly translated: *"if, as is the case, we believe not,"* or better yet, *"since we believe not."* Remember, this is written to believers. Paul is saying there will be times, in the life of each Christian, when he fails to believe. However, because we are in Christ, and Christ cannot deny Himself, He abideth faithful. Thus, our relationship as sons, is once and for all eternally secure, because of our position in Christ.

Look at Acts 16:31

"And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house."

Luke, the writer uses the aorist tense that refers to a point of time, divorced from time, taken out of time, and perpetuated forever. The moment we believe in Christ, that moment of time is taken out of time and perpetuated forever. Once a son, always a son. Once saved, always saved.

In Ephesians 2:8-9 the writer uses the perfect tense.

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: [it is] the gift of God:

Not of works, lest any man should boast.

The perfect tense in Koine Greek refers to a completed action in past time, with the results continuing through present time. Thus, this passage says, by grace, we have been completely saved in the past with the result that we continue to be saved.

Let me remind you once again that our salvation is secure because of our position in Christ. However, God does discipline us, as sons, when we are disobedient (Hebrews 12:5-13). We must be careful not to confuse relationship, which is established once and for all, with fellowship with God which is conditional.

There is a different circle which represents the sphere of fellowship with God. We will examine that sphere in the next study. The sphere of fellowship is diagrammed by a line

into the circle because that sphere is conditional. We get in and out of fellowship.

Salvation is eternal and is diagrammed by the circle with a dot in it. It is identified as our relationship to God as sons, by means of the new birth. This position in Christ is Illustrated by the physical act of water baptism. The ordinance of water baptism, like our position in Christ, is once and for all. It does not need repeating once it has been scripturally performed. However, the ordinance of baptism has no saving element but is only an outward testimony of this new union with Christ and should follow salvation.

Are you in Christ? Have you called upon Him for Salvation? If you will call upon the name of the Lord you will be saved- entered into union with him and you will have eternal life. You will be in Christ.

The Bible says, *“with the heart man believeth unto righteousness but with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”* Do you Believe? Have you confessed Him as Lord?

It goes on to say, *“whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”*

If you have made that decision, You are now **IN CHRIST**. In our continuing study, focused on living the Christian Life, we will see the assets for living life that are ours because we are **"IN CHRIST."** This will become obvious as we look at the bottom circle, the sphere of our life in Christ and see the many assets we access by faith in the Word of God. It is from the sphere of fellowship that we turn assets into production and become doers of the word and not hearers only.

But it begins at Salvation:

- *For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God...*
- *The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life...*
- *With the heart man believes unto righteousness...*
- *But with the mouth confession is made unto salvation...*
- *For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved!*

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

(Romans 12:1)